

November 1990

Chaos

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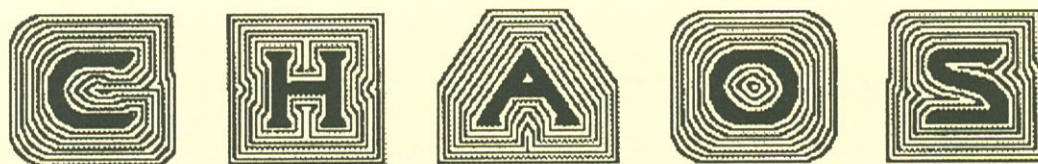


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Recommended Citation

Paul, Sandra K. (1990) "Chaos," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 2: Iss. 5, Article 15.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2295>

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by *Sandra K. Paul*

STANDARDS UPDATE

As fall settles in, here's an update on what has been happening in the world of standards.

ALA Preconference

With a modification of the name created by Katina (and reflected in the name of this column), the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) and Book Industry Study Group, with the support of LITA's Technical Standards for Library Automation Committee, sponsored an ALA Preconference entitled NISO + BISAC + SISAC + X12 + Z39 = CHAOS. This topic drew over 130 individuals to hear about MARC from experts such as Kathy Bales of RLG, barcoding from George Wright IV, and BISAC and SISAC from the chairs of those committees of the Book Industry Study Group. The conference also provided many in the audience, which was equally filled with librarians and vendors, with their first serious look at Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12 and Open Systems Interconnect (OSI) concepts. All attendees received the paper Elaine Woods prepared for the Library of Congress and NISO on ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: Purchase Orders. For those who missed the Preconference, copies of that paper are available from NISO (301/975-2814) for \$25.00 each.

ASC X12

It was announced at that Preconference that SISAC is joining BISAC in selecting from among the wide range of X12 Segments and Data Elements, those which are appropriate for the exchange of electronic orders, order acknowledgements, claims, cancellations and invoices. At the June ALA meeting of the Automation Vendor Information & Advisory Committee (AVIAC), concern was expressed that the library systems vendors which are not members of BISAC or SISAC will have no opportunity to "vote" on the X12 formats developed by those Committees. They asked NISO to consider what its appropriate role is in the development of these formats. To that end, representatives of NISO's Standards Development Committee will be meeting with the Chairpeople of BISAC and SISAC on September 11th to start such discussions.

Bar Coding

SISAC has developed an overhead projector "slide show" and script about the SISAC bar code Symbol which is offered to any group of librarians, publishers, or vendors. It is available from the Book Industry Study Group offices (212/929-1393) on request. The standard serial issue identifier on which this Symbol is based came up for vote during the summer. There are several "No" votes to be resolved before the standard can be approved and

companies such as Elsevier and Pergamon join Kluwer in printing the bar code symbol on all of their publications.

The summer saw some Chaos in the barcoding of books. A group of major retailers, including K-Mart, voted that mass market paperbacks should no longer carry the "price-point" Universal Product Code (UPC) on their back cover, as is currently required by supermarkets and drugstores. In addition, more and more hardback and trade paperback books are being distributed in supermarkets and publishers are confused about where and whether to print the UPC and/or the Bookland EAN, which identifies the title's ISBN. Western Merchandisers distributed neon-colored announcements to publisher's booths at the American Booksellers Association meeting in Las Vegas, calling for the consistent use of UPC.

A group of concerned individuals, including representatives of K-Mart and Western Merchandisers, met twice during the summer. They will ask BISAC at its September 21st meeting to reconvene its Machine-Readable Coding Subcommittee to try to resolve these problems.

It appears that this column is aptly named for this summer's events. We'll keep you posted on the resolution to some of this summer's CHAOS! ☘